



Attendance Policy

Headteacher signature	L Harvey
School Governance Signature (Chair of Management Team)	M Crouch
Date of latest review	May 2019
Regularity of review	Every 3 years

This policy applies to all children on roll at Dame Catherine Harpur's School and Nursery.

The aims of the school policy are:

- to support the Dame Catherine Harpur's School ethos in recognising that parents play a valuable role in children's education and that education is broader than a child's time in school
- to ensure that there is a clarity for families as to the school expectations in terms of attendance for children on roll.
- to support good attendance and punctuality
- to ensure effective safeguarding of children

The staff and leadership team at Dame Catherine's regard good attendance and punctuality as important in providing positive opportunities for children's education and supporting their social and emotional wellbeing. We are committed to a whole school approach to attendance and punctuality. At the same time Dame Catherine's is a school which centres ourselves around being sympathetic and supportive to individual family circumstances, approaches to education and priorities for their own children's education.

It is therefore crucial that we ensure our school works in partnership with parents promote good attendance and punctuality.

In order to achieve these aims the school will:

- Offer a safe and supportive environment, which welcomes children regardless of race, gender or ability.
- Establish clear and effective procedures for administration.
- Have clear guidelines as to when we authorise absence, including what we see as valuable educational opportunities for children to take part in with parents in school term-time.
- Foster a climate where the school community, teachers, parents/carers, governors (SMT) and pupils value attendance and punctuality.
- Comply with legal requirements.
- Ensure any child presenting poor levels of attendance and punctuality are noted, monitored and appropriate action taken.
- Have systems in place offering rewards and incentives for regular attendance.
- Keep parents/carers informed about their child's attendance through established procedures.
- Ensure our governors (SMT) takes an active role in promoting good attendance.
- Work in partnerships with parents/carers, the Education Welfare Service, Social Care and other outside agencies.

Expectations.

The school expects its pupils to:

- To attend regularly and on time.
- To be prepared adequately for the school day.
- To comply with the school policies and procedures.

The school expects its parents/carers

- To encourage their children to attend school every day, on time.
- To contact the school on the first day of absence.
- To arrange holidays and medical appointments outside school hours as far as is possible.
- To regularly update emergency contact details.

Registration.

The register is a legal document and as such can be used in a court of law (e.g. to establish a pupil's attendance or absence at a particular time on a precise day.)

The registers are marked at the beginning of each session, morning and afternoon. Registers are marked in the **first ten minutes** of the start of the school day. Registers are submitted to the office at 9:00am.

School begins at 9.00am and the doors are open from 8:45am. As the school start time is at 9.00am the library door which acts as the main entrance for children coming to school will be bolted again at 9.05am. We value this opportunity for staff to talk with parents, so appreciate children arriving by 9.00am at the very latest to enable conversations to still happen, whilst also ensuring that our learning is not disrupted.

School finishes for all children at 4.00pm. The library door will be unbolted by 3.55pm and parents / carers are welcome to wait in this area until children are dismissed by a member of staff.

Pupils arriving after the start of the school day (9.00am) must enter the school via the main entrance at the front of the building by ringing the bell where they will be met by a member of staff. **Parents** will be expected to sign their child in, recording their name, time of arrival and reason for lateness in the reception area. The pupil will then be escorted to their classroom by this staff member. It is vital that any pupil arriving late is signed in, in order to comply with Health and Safety procedures. Pupils arriving after the registers are taken (by 9:05 am) will be marked with a late (L) mark.

The registers are closed at 9:30am. Any pupils arriving after this time will be regarded as absent for the full morning session even though they are present in school. This will be coded as an unauthorised absence (U) in the register.

Registration will be taken again at the beginning of the afternoon session. 1:00pm.

Nursery

Nursery's morning session begins at 9.00am. Afternoon session begins at 1.00pm.

Authorised Absence

Absence may be authorised for the following reasons:

- Sickness
- Religious Observance
- Medical or Dental appointments which cannot be arranged outside of school hours. Where possible parents/carers should try to arrange these appointments for out of school hours.
- Permanent or fixed term exclusions.

Other circumstances

We recognise that in maintained schools days out / holidays in term time cannot be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Dame Catherine Harpur's School recognises both the educational and social and emotional value of time spent with parents and carers and that these opportunities are not always available during school holidays for every family. As such we do consider authorising time out of school under specific circumstances, but request that this time is not excessive. We might also request that there is evidence of educational learning provided on the child's return to school. We expect parents and carers to understand that as a school we are responsible for the educational progress and well-being of children, and that learning time missed or significant disruption to routines can have a negative impact in numerous ways.

In order for leave / holidays (including visits for individual days) to be authorised, parents and carers must seek authorisation from the headteacher by filling in the appropriate form (appendix A) at least 2 weeks in advance of the time requested unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Our guidelines also wish to make parents / carers aware of the following points:

- It will not be usual to authorise more than 10 days of leave / holiday for children in any one school year, unless there are exceptional circumstances agreed by the headteacher (which may be referred to a panel of the governors (SMT))
- Where a child is classed in a persistent absence category, or at risk of persistent absence we will only authorise additional leave / holiday in exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised Absences

Absences may be recorded as unauthorised for the following reasons:

- Late after registration is closed i.e. after 9:30 a.m. (unless the pupil or parent provides a legitimate reason or evidence for the absence.)
- Any absence which the school has not been informed about, either by letter or telephone.
- Any holiday / days out that have not been authorised by the Headteacher.

Patterns of Absence

First day of absence:

If a child is absent from school the parent/carer should contact the school via telephone before 9am wherever possible. If a parent/carer does not inform the school by 9.30am the school will seek to contact the parents / carers to ascertain why the child is absent.

Monitoring attendance and ensuring intervention if required

The average attendance nationally for schools over recent years has been between 95% and 96% and Dame Catherine's seeks to ensure that children are **'involved in valuable educational activities'** in line with this. For our school this means that we track attendance in education to include any **authorised** days where there is prior agreement that children are involved in **genuine** educationally valuable activities with their parents / carers in an alternative setting in. This does not automatically mean that authorised holiday time is classed as educational activity, but that in **certain agreed circumstances** these will be considered as educational experiences, when evidence is provided. Each case will be discussed with parents / carers, with the final decision lying with the headteacher.

We will also track attendance in terms of attendance to school (as a percentage of possible attendance.) In this way we can monitor and evidence the percentage of time spent in school as well as ensuring a more holistic approach of time spent involved in educational activities, with fits with the ethos of Dame Catherine Harpur's School and Nursery.

If a child's attendance falls below 90% we recognise that this can be classed as persistent absence. We monitor a child's absence on a half-termly basis, and should a child's attendance fall below 90% or be at risk of falling below 90% (between 90% and 93%,) we will discuss this with parents along with the impact of this, how this might be monitored further and strategies to address this. Class teachers will update parents and carers about attendance (and punctuality) during opportunities such as parent – teacher meetings. Class teachers will also discuss the impact of absences with the headteacher.

- Where this is the case parents might be asked to provide evidence (such as medical evidence)
- The school might suggest a specific plan be put in place
- The school might discuss involving other agencies where a family needs support.

Recording absences

Parents are required to offer a reason for any period of absence, before the absence if planned by used the 'notice of absence form', or on the first day of absence if unplanned.

This should be by contacting the school office by phone, preferably by 9am. Should a child not arrive in school by 9.30am the school will seek to contact parents / carers in order to determine the reason for absence.

The school might request that a period of absence is explained in writing by completing a notice of absence form on the child's return to school. The school will then decide if it wishes to record the absence as authorised or unauthorised based on guidance set out in the Education ((Pupil Registration) Regulations).

Monitoring attendance

The Headteacher and school leaders will review the attendance and punctuality of all the schools pupils on a regular basis.

The School's approach to Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality.

- At the end of every term, every child achieving 100% receives a certificate and their name read out in a celebration event.
- Yearly rewards are given for 100% children

Pupils who do not attend for a period of time / who are missing

Where a child has not attended school for over 5 days and all reasonable attempts have been made to contact parents / carers, the school will notify the appropriate Local Authority.

Removal of pupils from the school register

Where a parent chooses to remove the child from the school permanently for any reason, they will be requested to complete and exit form and attend a meeting with the headteacher. (appendix B)
Where there is no evidenced educational setting which the child is moving to, the school will contact the appropriate body within the Local Authority ie. to notify that the parents / carers will be home schooling. The is also the case where the parents / carers remove their child, giving the reason on home-schooling.

Should Dame Catherine's not hear from a child's new educational setting within a reasonable timescale, it will contact the school in order to clarify that the child is on roll at that new setting, before transferring relevant information.

Appendix A

Notification of Absence During Term Time

Full name of child / children

Reason for absence (eg. medical appointment, funeral, holiday)

Date / dates of absence for the period

Number of days in total

Please note that parents need to apply in advance for time out of school for a holiday, providing a minimum of 2 weeks notice, outlining why it is necessary to take the holiday in term time and if appropriate how this supports a child's education. Please also outline if these circumstances are exceptional and why you believe this to be the case.

All absences which have not been agreed in advance will be recorded as unauthorised.

The circumstances and reason for the request for leave are: -

.....
.....
.....

Signature of parent / carer

Please complete and return this form to the school office. In the case of requests for holiday during term time, the school will confirm whether this will be authorised leave within 7 days.

For Office Use Only

Most recent recorded attendance.....%

Number of school sessions taken as leave during term time (this academic year)

In the case of holiday request authorised / taken as unauthorised

Recorded in register as (and reason)

Headteacher signature

Signature (office) Date

Notification of decision and method of communication (eg. letter sent / e-mail response / verbal response.) Attach copy.

Appendix B

Name of child

Date last attended if not currently attending:

Reason(s) for leaving:

Please include in this box the name of the child's new school. We will contact this school to transfer records and to check the child is attending.

Should the name of a school not be provided, we will contact the Local Authority to inform them that the child is no longer attending this school.

To be completed by the headteacher.

I confirm that the parent/carer has discussed with me the reasons for leaving.
Response to parent / carer comments.

Details of attendance at school.

Signed:

Date:

Name (please print):

Position within School:

